Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Training for Polling Place Accessibility

Survey Tools Quick Guide

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Dear Reader:

This quick guide is being provided as a tool to assist the election official in ensuring that the equal right to vote for all eligible voters in New Jersey, regardless of a voter's physical disability or age, exists through the proper care and maintenance of accessible polling places.

The Division of Elections has been collaborating closely with county election officials, public officials, attorneys and advocates on behalf of the disabled, to improve polling place accessibility. The initiative has yielded many positive results and working relationships among the stakeholder groups at the county level.

The legislature has also responded by holding public hearings and proposing legislative bills designed to improve polling places. The Division of Elections has also increased services to the election official community including: sponsorship of training and educational workshops; produced resource guides and a training DVD; provided professional survey tools to all election officials and has placed a helpful resource link on our state website as a clearinghouse of information for use by election officials, etc. For more information on polling place accessibility, go to www.njelections.org.

Our gratitude goes out to Emily Templeton, Supervisor, NJ Department of Community Affairs Division of Code and Standards, and David M. Millstein, Asst. Deputy Director & ADA Administrator, NJ Department of Treasury, for their work with the Division of Elections in producing this quick guide.

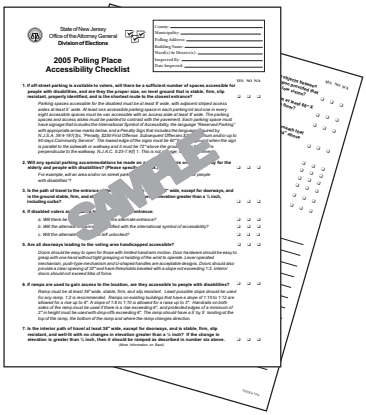
Maria Del Valle - Koch
Acting Director, Division of Elections

Evaluating Polling Place Accessibility

Getting Started - Tools Needed

1. Polling Place Accessibilty Checklist

The checklist is designed to prompt the inspector to check key features by measuring sloped surfaces, evaluate parking accommodations, paths of travel and door entrances to determine whether a polling place is accessible to voters with disabilities.


State of New Jersey
Office of the Attorney General
Division of Elections

2005 Polling Place Accessibility Checklist

SAMPLE

Utilizing the Polling Place Accessiblity Checklist

Under Public Law 98-435 each county board of elections office is required to complete a "Polling Place Accessibility Checklist" for each polling place located within their jurisdiction. Members of the county boards of elections, or individuals designated by the board must physically evaluate the accessibility status of each polling place. It is important to note the accessibility status of each area in every section and to provide comments where needed.

2. Door Pressure Gauge

The door pressure gauge allows the inspector to insure that an interior door is no more than a 5lbs push. The gauge can also be used on drinking fountains and sink faucets.

Operating Instructions:

1. Set the top (small) o-ring located on the plunger rod on zero, down against the instrument's flange; or set the o-ring on the desired force.

2. Holding the instrument firmly, press slowly against door at a point approximately handle-high, and 30 inches toward the handle door's hinges.

3. Read the amount of force required to open the door on the plunger scale closest to the bottom of the small o-ring.

3. Tape Measure

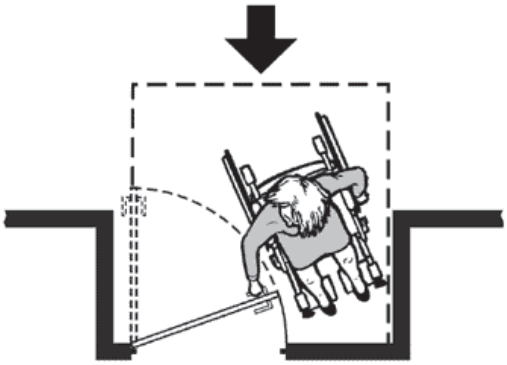
The tape measure can be used to measure width of a parking space, pathway and door opening. Measuring the clear opening of an accessible door requires special care.

Measuring the Opening of a Door

To measure the opening of a standard hinged door, open the door to 90 degrees. Place the end of the tape measure on the side of the door frame next to the clear opening (as shown in the drawing). Stretch the tape across the door opening to the face of the door.

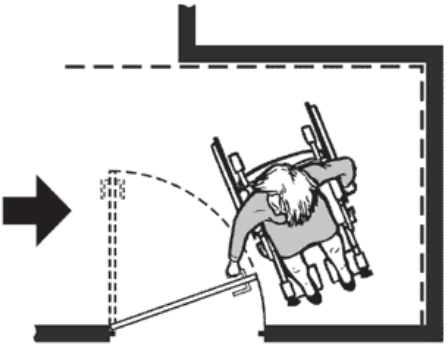
This measurement equals the clear open width of the door, which is typically less than the width of the door. Measuring the clear opening from the face of the doorstop on the frame to the face of the open door.

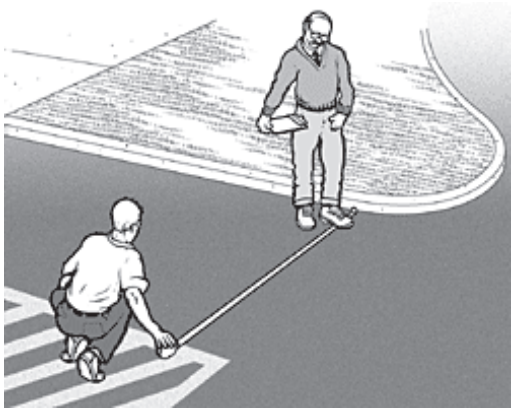
Accessible Door Openings



A clear floor space on the latch side of the door (pull side) allows a person using a wheelchair or scooter to pull the door open and then enter.

The size of the clear floor space varies depending on the direction of approach (shown by the arrows) and the door swing.



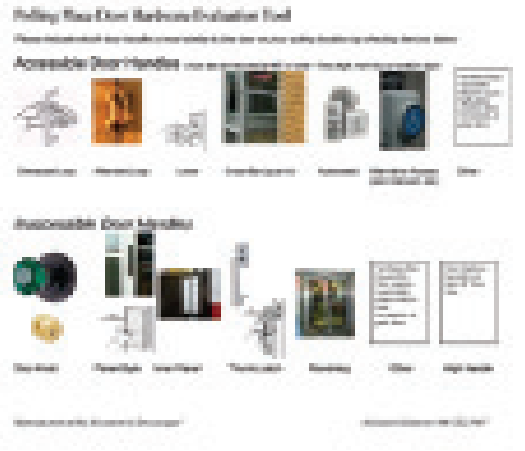


Measuring Width of Parking Space or Access Aisle

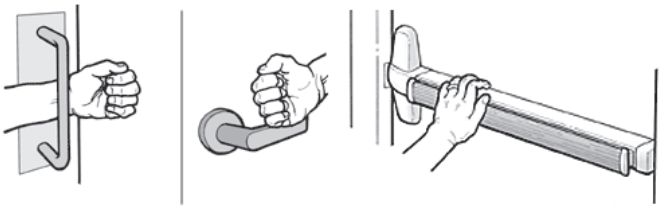
When measuring the width of a parking space or access aisle, the width of an accessible route or the height of an object above the floor, for example, try to keep the tape from sagging or bending. If the tape is not straight, try to support the tape in the middle or pull it tight and take the measurement again.

4. Door Hardware Evaluation Sheet

Many polling places have inaccessible door hardware or heavy doors that people with disabiliti cannot open. The door hardware evaluation shee is used to help the inspector identify accessible door handles.

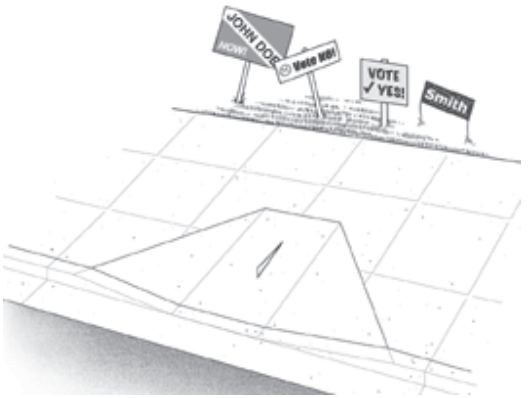


Examples of handles and door hardware that can be used without tight grasping, pinching, or twisting.



5. Deluxe ADA Surveyor

The ADA Surveyor Instrument is designed to asist the user in determining some of the critical physical features required by the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Guidelines.



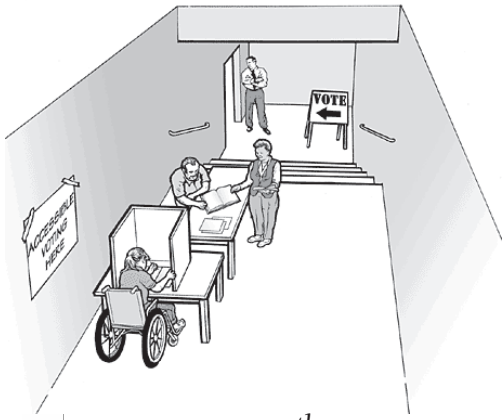
curb slopes

The ADA Surveyor is designed to help inspectors measure whether the following basic features are accessible:

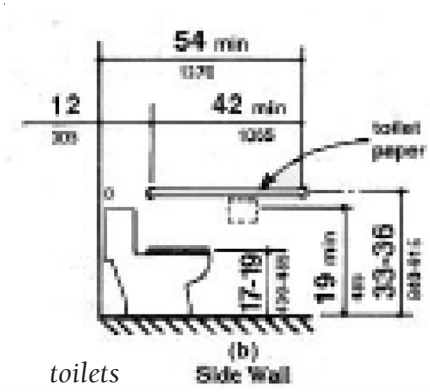
ramp & curb slopes

pathways and aisles

grab bars and railings
height of fixtures and devices



pathways



toilets

knee clearances

toilets

surface levels

Utilizing ADA Surveyor

Determining Vertical Dimensions (Doorways, Halls & Corridors):
Place the edge marked "**END**" on the floor or wall surface. The base of the surveyor has dimensional markings along the bottom edge which identify required minimum and maximum tolerances.

Measuring Grab Bars & Hand Rails:
At the hinged end of the base there is a 1½ diameter cut-out. By placing the cut-out over the diameter of the grab bar/handrail, you can determine if the rail is 1½ inches from the wall surface and if the diameter of the rail is 1½ inches.

Measuring Heights:
The base has a notch depth of ½ inch and a 45 degree angle used for measuring threshold heights. The notch can also be used for

determining the height of carpet by pressing the bottom edge of the surveyor firmly into the carpet.

Measuring Slopes, Ramps & Curbs:
The level is set into the bar. Set the center of the wing nut on the line of the slope setting marked on the base, and placed the surveyor on the area. When the bubble, in the level is in the center, the area is equal to the setting of the bar. If the bubble is to the left of the center, the area is more than the setting. If the bubble is to the right of the center, the area is less than the instrument's setting.

Temporary Solutions

Parking:

Problem:
Off street parking is available, but no accessible parking is provided or there are not enough accessible parking or van-accessible spaces:
Solutions:
Designate area nearest to entrance for accessible parking

Use traffic cones or other temporary elements to mark the spaces and access aisle

Provide signs to designate each accessible parking space

Problem:
Accessible parking available, but there are no marked access aisles
Solutions:
Restripe accessible parking spaces to provide an access aisle.

Use traffic cones or other temporary elements to mark off the access aisle and curb ramp area

Provide signs to designate each accessible parking space

Designate the first accessible parking space a van accessible space.

Problem:
No sign with the international symbol of accessibility or penalty signed installed
Solution:
Place temporary signs in front of each accessible parking space

Path of Travel (Sidewalks, Walkways & Entrance to Polling Place):

Problem:
Sidewalk connecting parking to the polling place too steep

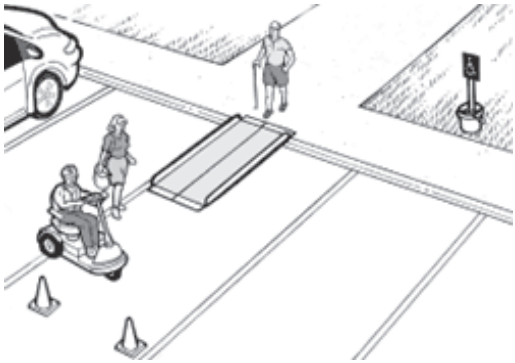
Solutions:
Ascertain if there is an alternate sidewalk that provides an accessible route

Provide the alternate entrance with the international symbol of accessibility

Ensure that the alternate entrance will be left unlocked

Problem:
Accessible route crosses a curb

Solution:
Install a portable ramp with edge protection



Problem:
One or two steps are part of the walkway leading to the entrance

Solution:
Install a portable ramp that has a slope no steeper than 1:10 to 1:12 with edge protection and handrails.

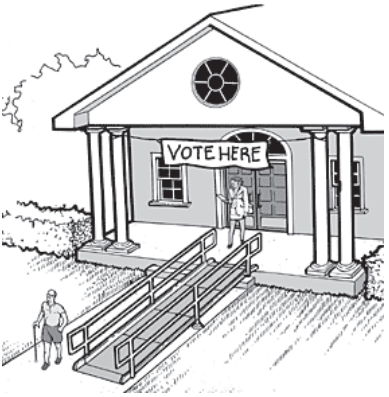
Problem:
Objects protrude too far from the wall causing a hazard for people who are blind or have low vision

Solutions:
Place an object or a barrier below the protruding object that can be easily detectable by someone using a cane or to alert people who are blind or who have low vision

Use traffic cones or other temporary elements to mark the spaces and access aisle

Provide signs to designate each accessible parking space

Problem:
One or two steps at entrance
Solution:
Install a short temporary ramp to provide a smooth transition



Problem:
Entrance door to building is heavy and difficult to open
Solution:
Keep the door propped open or assign someone near the door to open it

Problem:
Door handle and/or latch is not accessible
Solutions:
Leave door propped in an open position

Add an accessible pull or handle to the outside of the door and leave door unlatched

Install an accessible door handle and hardware

The information contained in this polling place accessibility survey tools quick guide has been created by the NJ Division of Elections to provide informal assistance and guidance to individuals designated to evaluate the accessibility status of polling places in New Jersey and does not constitute legal advice.

NOTES

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